

# DPW UPDATE

October 2003

## VC Road—Major Project Begins This Month

Valley Center Road stands on its tail as it leaves Escondido and shoots up to Valley Center, clinging to the hillside as it winds its way. Once a quaint county road, it's now often jammed with cars snaking their way to and from work or to major entertainment centers in the area along the main route between Valley Center and Escondido.



This month DPW breaks ground on one of its largest construction projects ever—a \$33 million project to widen the road to four lanes, add a striped median and two bicycle lanes, and add parkways.

Construction on the \$11 million Phase I goes from just inside the Escondido city limit to a mile south of Banbury Drive. This two-mile project will widen the road to 78 feet to handle four traffic lanes. It includes an 18-foot striped center median and two five-foot bike lanes and two 10-foot parkways. It also incorporates major drainage improvements and includes installation of wildlife crossings. The project will improve traffic circulation, enhance safety and improve the overall level of service and adds another segment to the County's Bicycle Circulation Element according to Project Manager Brendan McNabb of Construction Engineering.

Phase I is scheduled for completion between March and July 2005. Rincon's casino contributed \$727,800 to this phase and Pauma's casino added another \$129,000.

Phases II and III are scheduled to begin construction next summer and should take about two years to complete. They also include road widening, a painted center median and/or center turning lane, bicycle lanes and parkways.

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## How'd I know You Were Gone?

As the holiday season approaches, you may be considering taking time off. Before you go, make sure those who contact you by telephone and e-mail know you're out of the office.

When you're gone for an extended period, your customers, coworkers and the public can be upset if you don't return their messages promptly. Both your voice mail and e-mail systems have features that allow you to advise others that you're gone.

Make sure you leave information in your messages that let those who contact you of when you'll return and how they can contact someone else in the meantime. To activate these features, follow the directions on your Voice Mail system to record an alternate message and use your Out of Office Assistant located through the "Tools" link on the Outlook menu bar. Both systems will prompt you to turn them off when you return to work.

Taking a few minutes to set up these advisories saves frustration—both for you and the people with whom you deal.

## **Safety**

### **Bicycle Safety Means Knowing the Rules**

*By Carl Spiron, Safety Officer*

I have always enjoyed riding a bicycle. Growing up in San Diego we rode our bikes to school and to the park for baseball practice. I'd ride to the tip of Point Loma and along the North County coastline.

We live in a beautiful place where riding is a year-round activity. One concept I keep in mind is the danger of vehicles—car doors opening, stop signs, lights and pedestrians are all concerns.

The coast is a very popular route for both vehicles and bicyclists but the rate of bicycle accidents is on the rise and the volume of vehicles and bicycles is increasing. There are California vehicle codes that apply to all. Bicycle lanes are not completely safe and we must be aware, alert and courteous of each other. It's important to be aware of laws that apply to bicycles and teach our children when they get their first bike.

I have found two great web sites that will help remind of us our road safety responsibilities. The San Diego County Bicycle Coalition has a great site ([sdcbc.org](http://sdcbc.org)) for all aspects of bicycle riding, from the State Laws to the latest areas that will be open soon for Bike trails in San Diego. BicycleSafe.com has a great article for us and our children titled "How to Not Get Hit By Cars" with all the basics we want to remember.

Let's enjoy the beauty where we live. The population continues to increase but the three basics still remain the same. Common sense, courtesy, and knowledge of the vehicle code are the foundation of every successful bicycle outing.

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## **Training**

### **DPW Committed to Work Safe / Stay Healthy Program**

*By Kirsten Aaboe-Hope, Training Officer*

As you know, a Countywide program to minimize injuries, increase awareness of safety issues, and lower Workers' Compensation costs as a result, has been initiated by the Departments of Human Resources and Environmental Health, with very strong support from Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Bob Copper and Chief Administrative Officer Walt Ekard.

Here in DPW, we have a robust safety program in place, which will easily roll into the countywide efforts, but we want to make sure that our awareness is brought to the basic thrust of the program: working safe and minimizing injuries. Here's a brief synopsis of DPW efforts:

There are three levels of orientation to the Work Safe/Stay Healthy program: Level 1: Executive, Level 2: Supervisor/Manager, and Level 3: General Employee. That's just the orientation, though; the real issue is how we bring awareness of safety issues and potential risk into our workday so we don't get hurt on the job.

By the end of September, all DPW employees at all three levels were oriented in Work Safe/Stay Healthy. Executives were briefed, supervisors attended mandatory Work Safe/Stay Healthy Level 2 Supervisor training and all DPW employees saw the Work Safe/Stay Healthy video describing the program. Besides this attendance, and our injury statistics, the department will report on:

- how many safety meetings we've held and how many DPW employees have attended
- how much safety training has been conducted and how many staff have attended

The Training Calendar was reformatted to concentrate on safety training so all opportunities are accessible. These opportunities include a list of safety training classes organized and presented by Human Resources' Risk Management staff.

Besides the 7-minute Safety Trainer binders that are available at each road station, there are lists of videotapes to borrow on a variety of safety topics, available from the Training Office 858-694-2204. These tapes can be shown at section safety meetings. Our Safety Officer is regularly discussing safety with groups of employees. These discussions can be documented and legitimately counted as safety meetings.

Let's identify potential hazards by reporting them to our supervisor or the DPW Safety Officer, Carl Spiron. If we are continually thinking of how to work more safely, we will notice – and management will attempt to expeditiously correct – any potential hazards to our safety. We can lower our accident and injury rates if we all pay attention to Working Safe and Staying Healthy.

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## Division News

### Management Services

#### **DPW Update Takes PRSA Top Honors**

*DPW Update* walked off with the first place award in recent competition sponsored by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), San Diego chapter. The newsletter won the "Bernays Award" for two-color publications.



PRSA is the largest organization in the world for public relations professionals. Awards were presented in a variety of categories to reward efforts behind outstanding tactics or individual components of a campaign. Jessica Eslinger edited the DPW entries.

Entries were judged by PRSA chapters outside the region.

*Jessica Eslinger with PRSA award presented for DPW Update.*

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### Land Development

#### **Rain Gauge Change Saves Bucks +**

When your favorite TV weathercaster tells you "Eight-tenths of an inch of rain fell in Bonsall (or Borrego or Bonita) today..." that information came from one of 80 gauges set up throughout the County by DPW's Flood Control section. But those instruments are expensive—about \$2,000 each including equipment and labor—and difficult to work with.

With more than 30 units needing replacement, the County faces an outlay of \$60,000 or more and several weeks—if not a couple months—for delivery of the pre-fabricated gauges.

Enter Mike Jones and Robert Eitel of Flood Control.

Jones and Eitel designed and built a prototype system they say is equal in quality to the commercial gauges with parts from a local home improvement store. Total cost, including labor, about \$300. That's a savings of some \$50,000 for just the units needing replacement.

“This system is a lot safer to work on,” Eitel said. “Instead of having to stand on a ladder to replace or repair the equipment, we now have access from ground level.”

Prefabricated models are tall pipes with the rain measuring instruments at the top. The new version houses the instruments in a 50-gallon barrel sunk into the ground. Maintenance will also take less time.



“With the old system we’d have to climb the ladder, remove eight bolts, muscle the gear to the ground, fix it, then reverse the process,” Jones said. “Now we only have to remove the barrel’s cover and everything’s right in front of us at ground level.”

Installation of the new units begins soon.

*Robert Eitel, left, and Mike Jones with prototype rain gauge at County Operations Center.*